HOLIDAY Gift Guide

the Digital Lantern's Digital Restaurant Guide to San Francisco is for you.

Designed in HyperCard for Apple PowerBooks and other big screen Macintoshes, the DRG lists all thirty-one hundred-plus restaurants and provides an interactive travel experience that includes maps, sounds, and images of San Francisco's culturally diverse neighborhood restaurants. You can search for a restaurant by name, cuisine, or neighborhood, with each entry offering basic information such as address, phone, hours, handicapped access, payment method, and quality ratings for food, atmosphere, service. Restaurant reviews are provided by members of the Precision Dining Association (PDA) of San Francisco, a group of avid diners/PowerBook owners who meet periodically at different restaurants.

Special touches include map markers that light up to show which restaurants are open, voices of waitstaff who pronounce names of exotic dishes or a simple note that states a restaurant is "Open for another two hours and 19 minutes." Best of all, you can customize the DRG to reflect your own "bests" lists, change restaurant information or add new locations.

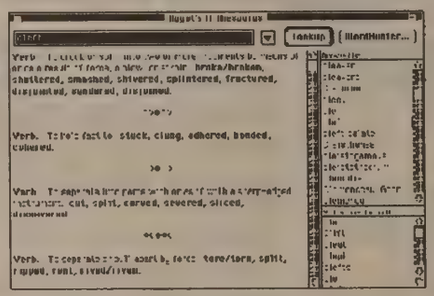
The DRG comes on three floppies and requires 8.5MB disk space. (Digital Lantern, Inc., 972 Chenery St., San Francisco, CA 94131. 415/337-6410)

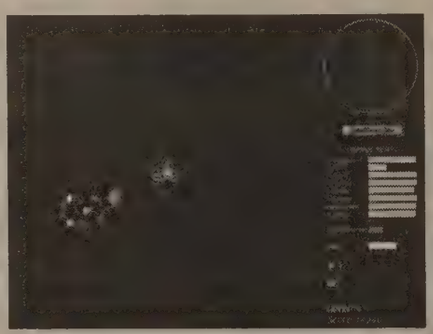
DELUXE AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY, THIRD EDITION

Published By: Star Press
For: Any Macintosh with 1MB RAM (2MB for System 7), hard disk with 14MB free space, System 6.0.2 or later. Windows and DOS versions also available.
List Price: $49.99
Reviewed By: Kevin M. Savetz

There are those of you who only use dictionaries to check the spelling of a word or find a quick definition. You already have the right words, but maybe you aren't sure how to use or spell them. Meanwhile, the rest of us are sitting miserably thinking, "What's the word for those big, puffy clouds?" The Deluxe American Heritage Dictionary v3 is dictionary software for all of us, combining complete dictionary features with some unexpected—and welcome—tools. The most notable feature is Word Hunter, a function to search definitions of words—to find the one that means exactly what you want to say. For instance, enter "measure and depth and water" and you'll see a list of words whose definitions contain each of those words (such as hydrometer, echo sounder and depth finder.) Then, click on one of the choices for a full definition.

Version 3 includes all the basic dictionary fare, including full definitions and pronunciation guides for each of its two hundred thousand words, hyphenation





Top: Deluxe American Heritage Dictionary from Star Press; Bottom: High Risk Ventures' Space Madness

rules, sample sentences, and word history. Roget's thesaurus is part of the package, providing hypertext links to synonyms, antonyms, and related words.

The software shows its power over its bound counterpart with the ability to search for words using "wildcards" (for instance, finding all the seven-letter words ending in "ent".) Puzzle-lovers will find joy in the ability to find anagrams for any word.

The American Heritage Dictionary works well as a standalone dictionary, but it won't spellcheck your word processing documents. It can also be slow, especially when using the WordHunter or searching with wildcards. (You can expect to wait about thirty seconds to complete a complicated search.) Its final drawback is its enormous size. It is a hard disk hog: the Macintosh version weighs in at 14MB. If you can handle the storage space, the American Heritage Dictionary on your computer will stop your tireless search for the whatchacallit. (Star Press, Inc., a division of WordStar International, Inc., 207 Alameda del Prado, PO Box 6113, Novato, CA 94948)

SPACE MADNESS

Published By: High Risk Ventures
For: Macintosh with 68020 CPU or better, 2.5MB RAM, 2MB hard disk space, 256-colors, system 6.0.7 or later.
List Price: $30
Reviewed By: Kevin M. Savetz

Space Madness is Asteroids on steroids. At first glance, it seems to be a basic mindless fly-through-space-destroying-the-nasties kind of game, but it is filled with goodies that will keep you coming back for further abuse. Detailed 256-color graphics, humorous sounds, and uncomplicated play make Space Madness a winner.

On each level, you must find and destroy the enemy base, then race through a vortex to the next level. The first few levels are relatively simple, offering few impediments between you and the enemy base. Level ten or so is where things change. A variety of vicious baddies (space tanks, mines, wubbly blobs, and so on) impede your goal. To make it a fair fight, there are plenty of enhancements along the way, such as extra torpedoes, automatic shield gadgets, and fuel.

Your space ship is equipped with the usual collection of goodies—pellets (your basic outer space B.B. gun), plasma torpedoes (the heavy guns), fuel, shields, a guidance system, and a scanner. Should a wayward enemy shot pummel your ship, woe to you if your torpedoes system fails—or worse, if your viewscreen goes out. That's right: each of the ship's systems can become damaged or go offline in the midst of combat. One hit on the viewscreen system will make objects appear fuzzy. Get hit again, and you might as well play with your eyes closed. A series of bar graphs at the side of the screen lets you know how each system is holding up. Systems are repaired automatically given enough time.

Continued...

The game includes other good effects. Objects affect the things around them: sweep close to a piece of floating rock without touching it, and it will veer around your ship, affected by your gravitational field. If you're too close to the enemy base when it explodes, you'll find yourself spinning backwards through space, out of control.

Experienced players may become bored with the first few easy levels, but the game has a quasi-hidden button for starting at any level. Some games penalize you for using a start-anywhere function, but Space Madness gives you extra points for it. Nice touch. My only complaint is that on levels with many objects (over twenty) game play is noticeably slower. As you turn enemies into space dust, things speed up again.

Space Madness is High Risk Ventures' first commercial product. They plan to add more goodies to the game. Updates will be made available to current owners of the game. (High Risk Ventures, PO Box 70690, Eugene, OR 97401)

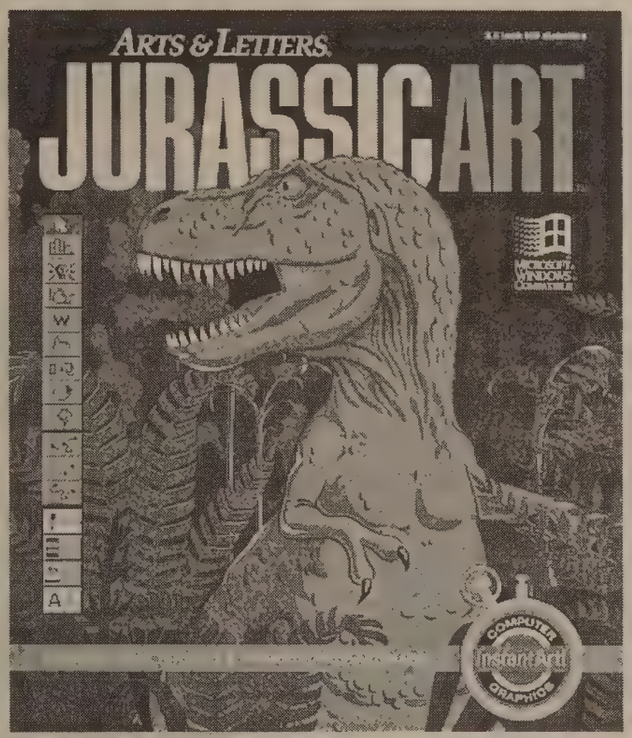
MULTIMEDIA SOFTWARE REVIEWS

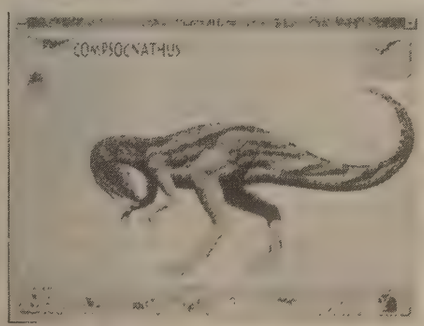
DINOSAURS CD-ROM DATABASE

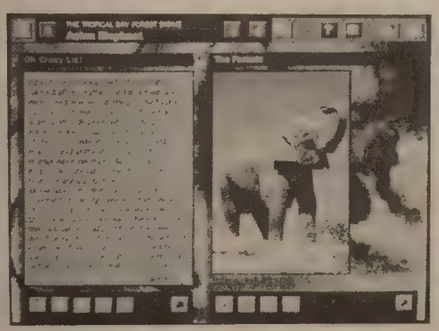
Published By: Microsoft
List Price: $79.95
Reviewed By: Woody Liswood

Dinosaurs is a fun way to view, hear, and watch these prehistoric creatures as they wander, hunt, fly, swim, and eat their way through the flora and fauna of their era. There are over one thousand illustrations and photographs of more than eighty dinosaurs to help you discover where and when they existed, what they ate, and who we think their relatives were.

Dinosaurs installs as a normal Windows program. Almost every part of the screen comes alive. As you move your cursor, for instance, it may change from the pointer to a hand. When the hand appears, click the mouse and you will get information, such as an article about the image the hand is touching.







Top: Arts & Letters Jurassic Art clip art images; Middle: Dinosaurs CD-ROM Database by Microsoft; Bottom: The San Diego Zoo Presents The Animals from Software Toolworks, Inc.

Most of the icons and screens on this CD-ROM use a carved stone motif. In the Index, clicking on a carved letter brings you a screen of all the dinosaurs that start with that letter. A click on the appropriate dinosaur begins your journey.

There are also seven multimedia movies about dinosaurs. For instance, there is one showing Triceratops chasing after another dinosaur through the forest, catching and fighting it, and eating its dinner. Yes, there is even the red blood from the other dinosaur on Triceratops' lips.

The Help system is not the normal text-based Windows Help. Instead, requesting Help brings a screen that uses the same graphics and methods as the rest of the program.

In the picture gallery you can make any of the pictures into Windows wallpaper. Also included in Dinosaurs is the ability to turn any of the dinosaurs' into a screen saver image. (Microsoft Corp., One Microsoft Way, Redmond, WA 98052)

ARTS & LETTERS JURASSIC ART

Published By: Computer Support Corp.
List Price: $59.95
Reviewed By: Woody Liswood

Jurassic Art contains over four hundred clip art images of dinosaurs plus scenes of volcanoes, dinosaur nests, leaves, ferns, trees, and other images to help you create realistic environments. There is also a database with a wealth of information about dinosaurs.

Running under Windows, Jurassic Art uses a product called Scenario to display and edit its images. There is a separate feature, called Flex-Art, that lets you modify and place your favorite dinosaur into almost any situation. This means that the same image from the clip art library can be made to stand, jump, claw, run, open mouth, close mouth, grab, or do almost anything.

If you already use Arts & Letters software, you can load the Jurassic Art clip are libraries directly into the Arts & Letters clip